

exploded in New York City. The following description of the riots is by Anna Dickinson, who was involved in the antislavery and women's rights movements. Her account is no exaggeration; the rioting was finally suppressed on the fourth day by troops from the Army of the Potomac.

Source: From Anna Elizabeth Dickinson, *What Answer?* (Boston, 1868), 242-259.

On the morning of Monday, the thirteenth of July, began this outbreak, unparalleled in atrocities by anything in American history, and equalled only by the horrors of the worst days of the French Revolution. Gangs of men and boys, composed of railroad *employees*, workers in machine-shops, and a vast crowd of those who lived by preying upon others, thieves, pimps, professional ruffians,—the scum of the city,—jail-birds, or those who were running with swift feet to enter the prison-doors, began to gather on the corners, and in streets and alleys where they lived; from thence issuing forth they visited the great establishments on the line of their advance, commanding their instant clos[ing] and the companionship of the workmen,—many of them peaceful and orderly men,—on pain of the destruction of one and a murderous assault upon the other, did not their orders meet with instant compliance.

A body of these, five or six hundred strong, gathered about one of the enrolling-offices in the upper part of the city, where the draft was quietly proceeding, and opened the assault upon it by a shower of clubs, bricks, and paving-stones torn from the streets, following it up by a furious rush into the office. Lists, records, books, the drafting-wheel, every article of furniture or work in the room was rent in pieces, and strewn about the floor or flung into the street; while the law officers, the newspaper reporters,—who are expected to be everywhere,—and the few peaceable spectators, were compelled to make a hasty retreat through an opportune rear exit, accelerated by the curses and blows of the assailants.

A safe in the room, which contained some of the hated records, was fallen upon by the men, who strove to wrench open its impregnable lock with their naked hands, and, baffled, beat them on its iron doors and sides till they were stained with blood, in a mad frenzy of senseless hate and fury. And then, finding every portable article destroyed,—their thirst for ruin growing by the little drink it had had,—and believing, or rather hoping, that the officers had taken refuge in the upper rooms, set fire to the house, and stood watching the slow and steady lift of the flames, filling the air with demoniac shrieks and yells, while they waited for the prey to escape from some door or window, from the merciless fire to their merciless hands. One of these, who was on the other side of the street, courageously stepped forward, and, telling them that they had utterly demolished all they came to seek, informed them that helpless women and little children were in the house, and besought them to extinguish the flames and leave the ruined premises; to disperse, or at least to seek some other scene.

By his dress recognizing in him a government official, so far from hearing or heeding his humane appeal, they set upon him with sticks and clubs, and beat him till his eyes were blind with blood, and he—bruised and mangled—succeeded in escaping to the handful of police who stood helpless before this howling crew, now increased to thousands. With difficulty and pain the inoffensive tenants escaped from the rapidly spreading fire, which, having devoured the house originally lighted, swept across the neighboring buildings till the whole block stood a mass of burning flames. The firemen came up tardily and reluctantly, many of them of the same class as the miscreants who surrounded them, and who cheered at their approach, but either made no attempt to perform their duty, or so feeble and farcical a one, as to bring disgrace upon a service they so generally honor and ennoble.

At last, when there was nothing more to accomplish, the mob, swollen to a frightful size, including myriads of wretched, drunken women, and the half-grown, vagabond boys of the pavements, rushed through the intervening streets, stopping cars and insulting peaceable citizens on their way, to an armory where were manufactured and stored carbines and guns for the government. In anticipation of the attack, this, earlier in the day, had been fortified by a police squad capable of coping with an ordinary crowd of ruffians, but as chaff before fire in the presence of these murderous thousands. Here, as before, the attack was begun by a rain of missiles gathered from the streets; less fatal, doubtless, than more civilized arms, but frightful in the ghastly wounds and injuries they inflicted. Of this no notice was taken by those who were stationed within; it was repeated. At last, finding they were treated with contemptuous silence, and that no sign of surrender was offered, the crowd swayed back,—then forward,—in a combined attempt to force the wide entrance-doors. Heavy hammers and sledges, which had been brought from forges and workshops, caught up hastily as they gathered the mechanics into their ranks, were used with frightful violence to beat them in,—at last successfully. The foremost assailants began to climb the stairs, but were checked, and for the moment driven back by the fire of the officers, who at last had been commanded to resort to their revolvers. A half-score fell wounded; and one, who had been acting in some sort as their leader,—a big, brutal, Irish ruffian,—dropped dead. . . .

Late in the afternoon a crowd which could have numbered not less than ten thousand, the majority of whom

were ragged, frowzy, drunken women, gathered about the Orphan Asylum for Colored Children,—a large and beautiful building, and one of the most admirable and noble charities of the city. When it became evident, from the menacing cries and groans of the multitude, that danger, if not destruction, was meditated to the harmless and inoffensive inmates, a flag of truce appeared, and an appeal was made in their behalf, by the principal, to every sentiment of humanity which these beings might possess,—a vain appeal! Whatever human feeling had ever, if ever, filled these souls was utterly drowned and washed away in the tide of rapine and blood in which they had been steeping themselves. The few officers who stood guard over the doors, and manfully faced these demoniac legions, were beaten down and flung to one side, helpless and stunned, whilst the vast crowd rushed in. All the articles upon which they could seize—beds, bedding, carpets, furniture,—the very garments of the fleeing inmates, some of these torn from their persons as they sped by—were carried into the streets, and hurried off by the women and children who stood ready to receive the goods which their husbands, sons, and fathers flung to their care. The little ones, many of them, assailed and beaten; all,—orphans and care-takers,—exposed to every indignity and every danger, driven on to the street,—the build-

ing was fired. This had been attempted whilst the helpless children—some of them scarce more than babies—were still in their rooms. . . .

By far the most infamous part of these cruelties was that which wreaked every species of torture and lingering death upon the colored people of the city,—men, women, and children, old and young, strong and feeble alike. Hundreds of these fell victims to the prejudice fostered by public opinion, incorporated in our statute-books, sanctioned by our laws, which here and thus found legitimate outgrowth and action. . . .

It was absurd and futile to characterize this new Reign of Terror as anything but an effort on the part of Northern rebels to help Southern ones, at the most critical moment of the war,—with the State militia and available troops absent in a neighboring Commonwealth,—and the loyal people unprepared. These editors [of Democratic newspapers] and their coadjutors, men of brains and ability, were of that most poisonous growth,—traitors to the Government and the flag of their country,—renegade Americans. Let it, however, be written plainly and graven deeply, that the tribes of savages—the hordes of ruffians—found ready to do their loathsome bidding, were not of native growth, nor American born.

Questions

1. According to Dickinson, what kinds of people made up the mobs?
2. Why did the mob attack blacks, including black children?
3. Why were the police and firemen so ineffective in stopping the riots and arson?

14-8 Carl Schurz Remembers Gettysburg (July 4, 1863)

The Battle of Gettysburg, July 1–3, 1863, was a defining moment of the Civil War. The Union victory ensured that Southern armies would never again invade the North and, coupled with General Ulysses S. Grant's capture of Vicksburg on July 4, signified that the South could not win its independence on the battlefield. But Gettysburg took a fearful toll in lives lost and maimed. More than 160,000 soldiers fought for three days, and when the fighting had ended at least 46,000 men lay dead or wounded. An estimated six million pounds of human and animal flesh were strewn across the battlefield. Military protocol required the victor to bury the dead because retreating armies could not, but General George Meade, the Union commander, was overwhelmed by the "debris of the battlefield." Carl Schurz, a German immigrant who later served as secretary of the interior in the administration of President Rutherford Hayes, participated in the Battle of Gettysburg as the commander of the Third Division of the Eleventh Corps. On July 4 Schurz visited the battlefield; the excerpt below is taken from *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, which was published posthumously in three volumes, 1907–1908.

Source: From Carl Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, 3 vols. (New York: The McClure Co., 1907–1908).